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Monthly report of the Secretary-General on Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraphs 6, 13 and 16 of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), paragraph 15 of resolution 1564 (2004), paragraph 17 of resolution 1574 (2004) and paragraph 12 of resolution 1590 (2005). It covers the period from 1 October to 10 December 2006.

II. Insecurity in Darfur

2. During the reporting period, the security situation in Darfur remained extremely volatile with both the Government and non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement continuing their relentless pursuit of a military solution to the crisis in disregard of that Agreement and the N'Djamena Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement. The situation was complicated by continued tensions within and among the belligerent rebel factions, and also aggravated by tribal conflicts, particularly in Southern Darfur. Clashes were reported among groups supporting the Darfur Peace Agreement in both Northern and Southern Darfur. Meanwhile, Chadian armed opposition groups based in Darfur resumed attacks deep inside Chadian territory. There were also reports of Darfur rebel groups receiving weapons from within Chad. Throughout the region, militia attacks on civilians increased, while attacks on humanitarian workers and African Union (AU) personnel dramatically reduced humanitarian access to populations trapped by the conflict.

3. Military confrontations between the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement reached new heights in October and November, and spread to areas outside Northern Darfur. On 3 October, Janjaweed militias supported by Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) helicopters attacked positions of the Group of 19 (G19)/National Redemption Front (NRF) in Malagat, Northern Darfur. In retaliation, NRF attacked an SAF post in Karyare, close to the Chadian border, on 5 October. The combined rebel forces reportedly took control of Karyare on 7 October, with SAF suffering a large number of casualties. Government aircraft subsequently bombed the rebel-held town. NRF claimed to have seized dozens of vehicles and captured hundreds of SAF soldiers in the battle. Twelve seriously wounded SAF soldiers were evacuated to El Fasher, while 77 injured soldiers and rebels arrived at a hospital in Bahia, Chad.

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4. On 12 and 13 October, SAF attacked rebel positions in Kulbus, Western Darfur. My Special Representative visited Northern Darfur from 16 to 18 October and appealed to G19 and NRF commanders to cease attacks, citing the holy month of Ramadan as an opportunity to halt the spiralling violence. He obtained verbal pledges from the rebel commanders that they would act only in self-defence. SAF continued its attacks, with an aerial bombardment of suspected NRF hideouts north of Kulbus on 17 October. As security deteriorated, 18 humanitarian staff were evacuated from Kulbus to El Geneina. On 18 October, the Government bombed areas east of Birmaza in Northern Darfur.

5. While the signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement respected the ceasefire towards each other in October, tensions between the parties escalated and minor incidents were reported, reflecting the fragility of their alliance and lack of discipline among their forces. On 10 October, the Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and Government soldiers engaged in a firefight in El Fasher, causing at least three civilian casualties. The following day, Government soldiers attempted to raid a house occupied by SLM-Minawi soldiers in El Fasher. A series of security incidents was also reported in Nyala, between SLM-Minawi soldiers and Government security forces.

6. Fighting among rebel groups and tribal tensions in areas controlled by parties supporting the Darfur Peace Agreement further hampered implementation of the fragile peace agreement. During the reporting period, clashes resumed between SLM-Minawi and the breakaway faction of that rebel group, SLM-Free Will, in Muhajirya, Southern Darfur, when SLM-Minawi repulsed an attack by approximately 300 SLM-Free Will forces on 23 October. Meanwhile, tensions further increased in Gereida, Southern Darfur, between the Zaghawa-dominated SLM-Minawi and the local Massalit population, which formerly supported SLM-Minawi. Following the 28 September attack on the SLM-Minawi headquarters near the town, members of the Massalit tribe in Gereida revolted against the SLM-Minawi forces, protesting the recent increase in attacks on civilians. During his visit to the area from 3 to 5 October, my Special Representative was told that lack of discipline in the SLM-Minawi forces had resulted in the increase of banditry in the area. On 9 and 10 October, shooting incidents were reported near Gereida, leaving one person dead and others wounded. As a result of this insecurity in Gereida, the Department of Safety and Security relocated seven United Nations staff members and 70 from international non-governmental organizations from Gereida to Nyala.

7. Also in October, armed militias continued to attack civilians with impunity. On 8 and 11 October, armed elements on camels and vehicles burned down several villages near the Shadad camp for internally displaced persons, 70 kilometres south of El Fasher. When the villagers tried to escape to the camp, the militia opened fire on them. The militia members reportedly used the farms of the displaced villagers to graze their animals.

8. On 29 October, several hundred Arab militia members, wearing military uniforms and armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, attacked the villages of Gebasesh, Hijlija, Siberia and Goze Mino in Western Darfur. The attackers looted livestock and killed at least 52 people, including many children and elderly people. Rebels from SLM and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

later engaged the attackers, allegedly killing 21 militia members. Government forces from a nearby SAF post did not intervene to stop the attack.

9. Banditry continued unabated in Darfur over the reporting period. On 8 October, bandits on horses and camels ambushed two commercial buses, near Kass, Southern Darfur, killing the drivers and seriously injuring two passengers. On 9 October, three men ambushed a truck on the Nyala-Kubum road. The attackers killed the driver and injured two others. On 11 October, SLM Abdul Shafi rebels reportedly robbed the drivers of three commercial trucks 100 kilometres west of Tawila.

10. Hijacking and armed robbery of humanitarian vehicles has continued. On 2 October, five armed men ambushed two vehicles belonging to non-governmental organizations, 11 kilometres south of Nyala. While the second vehicle managed to escape, the attackers beat the driver of the first vehicle and stole his money. On 11 October, two vehicles belonging to non-governmental organizations were stopped by eight militia members at Goussa Shark, 35 kilometres north of Nyala. The attackers stole money, a satellite phone and other valuables. In the same period, four aid workers were attacked between Zalingei and Nertiti by a dozen armed men who beat them and threatened to kill them. The perpetrators sexually harassed one female staff member. On 15 October, five men stole a vehicle belonging to an non-governmental organization and a satellite phone at the Dorti camp for internally displaced persons.

11. During the reporting period, AU forces continued to face harassment and movement restriction by rebel groups. On 4 October, 140 SLM-Minawi troops held an African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) patrol hostage in Thabit for two hours for escorting representatives of SLM-Abdul Shafi through controlled areas by SLM-Minawi. The patrol was allowed to proceed to Zam Zam after the SLM-Abdul Shafi representatives surrendered five satellite phones. On 16 October, two SLM-Minawi commanders and the traditional chief (*Umda*) of Labado demanded that AMIS vacate its team site in Labado, Southern Darfur, within 24 hours, accusing AMIS of being partial. AMIS returned the following day after the SLM commanders apologized.

12. In a more recent and particularly alarming development, there were serious clashes between Janjaweed forces and the Minni Minawi faction of SLA in El Fasher on 4 December. As a result, some 135 non-essential United Nations staff were relocated to Khartoum the following day. Both AMIS and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) were put on high security alert during and immediately after the clashes.

13. The situation in Western Darfur has deteriorated considerably over the past month, with increased banditry and ambushes on the roads especially to the north of El Geneina along the Chad-Sudan border. Three cars were hijacked in November, two within El Geneina itself, where a curfew was imposed. On 9 December, a group of 30 heavily armed men attacked a commercial truck carrying medical and non-food items between Kondobe and Sirba: 22 people died and several others were injured. In protest, the local community held in Sirba the helicopter sent by AMIS to investigate the incident.

III. Regional issues

14. The reporting period saw a grave deterioration in bilateral relations between Chad and the Sudan, marked by the attack on an SAF post in Karyare mentioned in paragraph 3 above and a new offensive against the Government of Chad by Chadian armed opposition groups based in Darfur.

15. On 22 and 23 October, a recently formed Chadian rebel group, the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), presumably based in Darfur, briefly captured the towns of Goz Beida and Am Timam before retreating to positions outside the towns. The Chadian National Armed Forces (FANT) pursued the rebels, which provoked additional violent clashes on 29 October in Chad close to the Sudanese border. Both sides reportedly suffered high casualties, including the death of the FANT Deputy Chief of Staff. Chad also accused the Sudanese air force of bombing the towns of Bahai, Tine, Karyare and Bamina along its eastern frontier, an accusation denied by the Government of the Sudan.

16. In a further escalation of violence, UFDD attacked and took control of the town of Abéché, situated approximately 900 kilometres east of N'Djamena, on 25 November. According to the UFDD leader, former Defense Minister Mahamat Nouri, 22 rebels and 140 Government soldiers were killed in the battle. The Government of Chad retook the town of Abéché after a day of fighting. In response to the situation, the Government of Chad extended a state of emergency in N'Djamena and several areas in the east for an additional six months.

17. As Abéché serves as the base for dozens of relief organizations, the recent event considerably undermined the delivery of aid to populations in need. The number of Sudanese refugees in Chad has grown to more than 234,000. There are also 47,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and 90,000 internally displaced persons. Already, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have reported that about $1.5 million worth of aid intended for refugees was looted in Abéché during the events of 25 and 26 November.

18. On many occasions, Chadian rebel groups were reported to have crossed the border with the Sudan. The Government of Chad is said to have strengthened its security presence around the capital, as rebel spokesmen continue to threaten future attacks.

19. In another worrying development, the Central African Republic accused the Sudan of supporting rebels in the country after a small group called the Union of Rallied Forces captured the town of Birao, near the border with Chad and the Sudan. The Sudan rejected the accusation. Chad reportedly said it was sending troops to the Central African Republic to help fight rebels.

IV. Human rights and protection

20. Persistent high levels of insecurity, particularly in Southern Darfur, continued to force substantial numbers of civilians to flee their villages and leave their cultivated farmlands. The additional military presence in towns increased the threat of abuse of the civilian population by armed groups. Attacks in and around camps for internally displaced persons continued, and violence against women and girls

remained a concern. Overall, courts in Darfur have made little progress in addressing the abuses.

21. Fighting among rebels and tribal clashes in Muhajiriya and Gereida, Southern Darfur, displaced large numbers of civilians. Up to 10,000 internally displaced persons abandoned their camps in and around Muhajariya to seek refuge near the AMIS group site. While many later returned, renewed tensions on 23 October again forced approximately 2,000 persons to seek refuge near the African Union mission. Five combatants and one civilian were killed during the clashes and more than 150 houses were burned down. Gereida now has the largest concentration of internally displaced persons in the region, numbering more than 120,000. Thousands of other displaced are scattered in the bush, where humanitarian access is extremely limited.

22. As fighting intensifies in Darfur, civilians invariably bear the brunt of the conflict. In Northern Darfur, ongoing military clashes between NRF and SAF and aerial bombardments continue to affect the rural population. The extent of civilian casualties is largely unknown, owing to lack of access for security reasons. As populations flee to inaccessible areas, they become increasingly vulnerable.

23. Reports of violence in and around internally displaced persons camps persisted in October. On the night of 4 October, two internally displaced persons were killed in Kalma camp by a group of 10 to 15 armed men. On the same day, suspected Falata tribesmen attacked 12 internally displaced persons collecting firewood near Yasin camp, Southern Darfur. The attackers abducted one of the internally displaced persons and took away livestock. On 14 October, a displaced male was killed by militia members outside Abararas camp, Southern Darfur.

24. In Gereida, civilians who were previously attacked by pro-Government militias are now subjected to both militia and rebel attacks. Fatalities, injuries and dozens of new cases of severe abuse of civilians by SLM-Minawi combatants have been reported in October, including abduction, rape, harassment and torture. There has also been an upsurge in the number of cases of gender-based violence. Of additional concern are reports that SLM-Minawi is preventing women from reporting incidents of sexual violence to AMIS.

25. An increasing number of rapes has been recorded in five internally displaced persons camps in Western Darfur and in the Abu Shouk and Al-Salaam camps, Northern Darfur, while violence targeting women and girls was reported in Kebkabiya and Kutum. As cases of sexual and gender-based violence persist, courts in Darfur continue to move slowly in prosecuting them. In addition, there is a recurring failure of defendants and key witnesses to appear before the court, particularly with respect to cases against Government actors. In Western Darfur, two rape trials were adjourned by the Geneina General Court on 1 and 2 October owing to the repeated non-appearance of the defendants, including a People's Defence Forces member and an ISAF soldier. The head of the Geneina local police, who was required to present evidence, was also absent from the 1 October hearing. According to the judge, the court has unsuccessfully requested the presence of this police official for over a year.

26. Government authorities continue to restrict the free movement and activities of United Nations staff, in breach of the Government's obligations under the status-of-forces agreement. On 15 October, national security authorities prevented two United Nations staff members from boarding a United Nations flight to Nyala on the

grounds that they required "permits" from the Government's humanitarian assistance coordination office. In Western Darfur, contrary to the status-of-forces agreement, the coordination office is now demanding that all United Nations personnel, with the exception of UNMIS personnel, carry travel permits. Meanwhile, the Governor of Northern Darfur continues to assert that he "has not received orders" from Khartoum to apply the status-of-forces agreement, and as such will only issue travel permits in line with past agreements.

V. Humanitarian situation

27. Although humanitarian operations in Darfur continue to be seriously hampered by security incidents and access restrictions, gains continue to be made in all life-saving sectors, as shown in the September 2006 food security and nutrition survey. The survey indicated stable malnutrition and mortality rates with respect to the previous year. Additional financial resources, however, will be required in the coming months to maintain the current levels of assistance.

28. The shifting of front lines, the further fragmentation of armed groups and their unclear chain of command further complicate safe humanitarian access to many of the 3.8 million people now affected by conflict in Darfur. Moreover, frequent banditry makes road travel increasingly hazardous for humanitarian workers. The United Nations regularly assesses the local security situations and attempts to secure routes and negotiate safe passage for aid convoys, while advocating for the respect of humanitarian principles. These efforts, however, are becoming ever more difficult.

29. Despite manifold constraints, the humanitarian community has been able to implement the bulk of its programmes and safeguard humanitarian standards. In September, WFP and its partners distributed food to almost three million people, although 195,000 people could not be reached as a result of fighting and road banditry in Northern Darfur. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) successfully completed their annual Darfur emergency food security and nutrition survey in September (see para. 27 above). Preliminary results show that overall malnutrition rates remained statistically unvaried and below the emergency threshold, with global acute malnutrition at 13.1 per cent and severe acute malnutrition at 2 per cent. The situation in Northern Darfur remains problematic, however, with global acute malnutrition at 16 per cent, which is above the emergency threshold of 15 per cent. Mortality rates dropped from 0.48 per 10,000 per day in 2005 to 0.36 in 2006. Food aid will remain necessary in 2007 as 70 per cent of the conflict-affected population is still considered food insecure. Only 51 per cent of the surveyed households have cultivated land this year, the same proportion as in 2005. The success of the harvests and the ability to monitor them will depend on the prevailing levels of insecurity during the coming months.

30. In Western Darfur, an outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea, was abated by various preventive measures such as chlorination of water points and accelerated distribution of soap and hygiene education. During the rainy season, activities to control the outbreak of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and yellow fever have also been stepped up.

31. In response to the influx of tens of thousands of new internally displaced persons in several camps, the humanitarian community has extended water and sanitation services, upgraded health services and increased food distributions. Overall, 73.3 per cent of affected populations in Darfur now have access to safe water, up from 62.5 per cent last year. Insecurity and road conditions have somewhat delayed the distribution of non-food items, but commercial trucks have been able to supply shelter and other materials to the most needy groups in internally displaced persons camps, schools, clinics and orphanages.

32. Over the last two months, Sudanese authorities have been increasingly limiting humanitarian space in Darfur. The national security service prevented three non-governmental organizations from working in Southern Darfur. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) received two letters from the Government of the Sudan expelling the organization from Darfur and requiring it to hand over all material assets to the Government prior to its departure. While the international community has objected to the confiscation of humanitarian property by the Government, NRC has declared that it will withdraw from Darfur. Humanitarian agencies are scrambling to fill the massive void left by the organization's expulsion.

VI. Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement

33. The implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement virtually stalled during October and November. While efforts to broaden the support base of the Agreement continued, they were overshadowed by continued fighting on the ground. Some progress has been made in preparing the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation and improving the efficiency of the Ceasefire Commission. Power- and wealth-sharing commitments, however, remained largely unaddressed.

34. A number of initiatives, both by Sudanese and international actors, were undertaken to broaden the support base of the Darfur Peace Agreement. However, efforts are hampered by the increased fragmentation of rebel groups, slow implementation of the Agreement and lack of coordination. There were indications that both parties to the Agreement could accommodate some of the demands of the non-signatories.

35. October and November also saw very limited progress in the implementation of the security protocol of the Darfur Peace Agreement. On 17 October, SAF, SLM-Minawi and JEM-Wing for Peace submitted to the Ceasefire Commission information on territorial positions they claimed. The AMIS Force Commander stated that positions would be verified and compared to those given in May during the Abuja negotiations. The Force Commander rejected the Government's demand that non-signatories be removed from AMIS premises, stating that the door of dialogue must remain open. The Government's plan to disarm the Janjaweed has been referred to the Joint Commission with comments from the Ceasefire Commission. However, the next Joint Commission meeting has yet to be scheduled.

36. There was virtually no progress on power-sharing in October. The President of the Sudan issued decrees establishing four pursuant to the Darfur Peace Agreement institutions: the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority, the Technical Ad Hoc Border Commission, the Darfur Rehabilitation and Resettlement Commission and the Compensation Commission. However, SLM-Minawi claimed that the decrees

were inconsistent with certain aspects of the Agreement and sent them back to the Presidency for revision.

37. On wealth-sharing, the Darfur Joint Assessment Mission concluded the current stage of its work with a consolidation of the technical teams' field work. The mission cannot be completed at this stage because of insecurity in Darfur and the refusal of major Darfurian groups to join the Darfur Peace Agreement.

38. The hosting by SLM-Minawi on 16 October of a day-long forum in Khartoum in anticipation of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation was seen as a positive development. The forum, attended by a broad cross-section of approximately 500 Darfurians as well as SLM-Free Will and senior representatives of the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) represents the first significant effort by the Darfur Peace Agreement signatories to jointly reach out to civil society. Discussions were frank, demonstrating the potential for the Dialogue and Consultation to catalyse stakeholders to take forward a sustainable peace process.

39. During the last week of November, Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy of the AU Commission Chairperson, met Sudanese officials as well as non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement to broaden support for the peace process in Darfur. Subsequently, the officer in charge of UNMIS and Mr. Salim held bilateral consultations on steps to be taken to reinvigorate the political process under a joint AU/United Nations umbrella and agreed to form a working-level team to prepare for the resumption of talks early in January 2007. The team has also been mandated to consult with Darfur Peace Agreement signatories, non-signatories and other local actors and to stress the importance of an immediate cessation of hostilities, the need for a commitment to a ceasefire and the mechanisms created by the Darfur Peace Agreement and the need to complement the new political talks with a credible Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation.

VII. United Nations support to the African Union Mission in the Sudan

40. The United Nations and the African Union have agreed on a package of immediate United Nations support to AMIS. This "light support package" includes logistical and material support, 105 military staff officers, 33 police advisers and 48 civilians to assist AMIS in the areas of mine action, public information and support for Darfur Peace Agreement implementation. The support package is intended to immediately enhance the operations of AMIS through a proactive advisory role by United Nations staff. On 3 October, President Bashir expressed his support for the assistance package. In October, only nine United Nations police advisers and nine military staff officers could be deployed to Darfur, in the light of the Government's restriction on United Nations military and police personnel travelling to Darfur while wearing blue berets.

41. UNMIS has acquired land and has started to move equipment to El Fasher. Delivery of the full package was further delayed in November by the Government's initial insistence that a "protocol" on United Nations assistance to AMIS be negotiated. However, during a meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 12 November, President Bashir agreed that the current

status-of-forces agreement is sufficient, and that a tripartite AU-United Nations-Government of the Sudan mechanism be created to facilitate the implementation of United Nations support for AMIS.

42. In a further positive development, a memorandum of understanding on United Nations support to AMIS was signed in Addis Ababa on 25 November by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the Officer in Charge of UNMIS.

43. Consultations on the longer-term "heavy" United Nations support package for AMIS, which includes substantial air assets, significant military and police advisory capacity, civilian support for the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement and a range of United Nations enabling capabilities, were conducted during the first week of December in Addis Ababa. The United Nations and the African Union jointly identified the contents of the proposed package, which is being shared with the Government of the Sudan. In the light of the dramatic situation on the ground, it is my intention to proceed with the implementation of both support packages without delay.

44. On 16 November, I co-chaired a high-level meeting in Addis Ababa with the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konaré. This meeting, which was attended by the Government of the Sudan, several United Nations Member States, the European Union, the League of Arab States and a number of African countries who currently provide troops to AMIS, had the objective of identifying concrete steps to be taken to improve the current situation, notably to re-energize the peace process, establish a strengthened ceasefire and delineate the way forward for peacekeeping in Darfur.

45. With regard to the political process, the meeting produced an understanding that only a negotiated settlement, and not a military solution, could bring the conflict to an end. The meeting also agreed that the existing Darfur Peace Agreement would remain at the heart of any settlement, but would have to be made more inclusive, and that the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation had a key role to play in complementing the Darfur Peace Agreement.

46. The Addis Ababa consultation also concluded that various efforts to bring non-signatories on board had to be brought under one umbrella, and that the African Union and the United Nations — calling on international partners for support whenever appropriate — were best positioned to lead the process. On that basis, it was agreed that, as a next step, the African Union and the United Nations would soon convene a meeting of non-signatories, the Minawi faction of SLM and the Government to address and resolve outstanding issues by the end of the year.

47. The discussions in Addis Ababa confirmed the critical importance of an agreement by all parties to cease hostilities immediately and welcomed the recent decision to empower the AMIS Force Commander to create direct links with non-signatories, which will give him greater scope to move the parties away from violence and towards negotiations.

48. Some progress was also made, at least on paper, on the way forward for peacekeeping in Darfur. Using a non-paper I had circulated before the meeting as the starting point for our discussions, a number of basic principles were clarified, starting with the essential requirement for a logistically and financially sustainable force, which would be able to contribute to the restoration of security and protection

of civilians in Darfur through the implementation of security aspects of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

49. With regard to the financing, I expressed my willingness to propose to the appropriate bodies that the United Nations provide all required funding for peacekeeping in Darfur. However, I qualified this proposal, noting that it was unlikely to receive support unless the United Nations were also put in a position to provide some form of management support and accountability mechanisms for the operation.

50. The meeting in Addis Ababa also confirmed the hope that a peacekeeping force in Darfur could be predominantly African in nature, with troops, as far as possible, sourced from the continent. To complement those troops, the meeting confirmed that the United Nations would provide backstopping and command and control structures for an expanded peacekeeping presence in Darfur. I explained to the meeting that this provision would be indispensable for the troop and police contributors which the United Nations would probably approach to provide the necessary specialist support and enabling functions, since these contributors would provide personnel and assets on the basis of the United Nations having in place standard support structures and mechanisms and clear command and control arrangements. There was also agreement that the regional security situation would have to be taken into account.

51. In addition to these basic principles, the meeting took a number of decisions with regard to the material steps to be taken to strengthen AMIS in Darfur. The meeting concluded that the United Nations would continue to implement the previously agreed "light support package" for AMIS in collaboration with the African Union and in full cooperation with the Government of the Sudan; that the "heavy support package", or phase two, would be taken forward and that the existing tripartite (United Nations-AU-Government of the Sudan) mechanism established to take forward the light package would also facilitate implementation of the heavy package; that an AU-United Nations hybrid operation would subsequently be established, led by a Special Representative and commanded by a Force Commander who would both be jointly appointed by the United Nations and the African Union; and finally, that I should, as previously mentioned, propose to the appropriate bodies that the United Nations provide all required funding for peacekeeping in Darfur.

52. The hybrid operation discussed in Addis would, in principle, reflect the recommendations I made in my report of 28 July to the Council on peacekeeping in Darfur (S/2006/591). That is, it would be comprised of up to 17,000 troops and 3,000 civilian police, as well as formed police units, whose numbers will be determined at a later date.

53. The conclusions of the 16 November high-level consultations call for a stronger, more capable, better financed peacekeeping operation, benefiting from the best of AMIS and also the experience and resources of the United Nations. The added value could include both funding and the identification and deployment of capabilities and troops which may not be available among AU member States; unified AU-United Nations leadership; and also the day-to-day backstopping, support and guidance from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

54. However, as the discussion in Addis Ababa took place, the Foreign Minister of the Sudan stated that his Government would consult internally on two elements of the plan for the way forward regarding peacekeeping in Darfur, namely the troop ceiling and the joint appointment of the Special Representative and the Force Commander, and that the Government would shortly revert to me with its views.

55. Subsequently, on 30 November, the AU Peace and Security Council convened a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, and endorsed the conclusions of the 16 November meeting.

56. During the open segment of the Peace and Security Council meeting, the Government of the Sudan distributed a document entitled "Position of the Government of Sudan regarding outstanding issues raised during the consultative meeting in Addis Ababa on the third phase". This paper expressed the following views of the Government with respect to the outstanding matters arising from the 16 November meeting in Addis Ababa.

57. With regard to the senior leadership of a hybrid operation, the Government asserted that the "Special Envoy" would be jointly appointed by the African Union and the United Nations, and would be "an African acceptable to the Government of the Sudan". During the meeting, President Bashir supplemented this position by insisting that the Force Commander of a hybrid operation would be appointed by the African Union only.

58. With respect to command and control, the Sudanese document took the position that these command and control were the sole responsibility of the African Union, although command could be enhanced by "applying United Nations systems and structures as well as United Nations advisers", provided that their ranks were junior to those of African commanders.

59. On the size of the force, the Sudanese paper referred this issue to the tripartite mechanism established to facilitate implementation of the first two phases.

60. Finally, the Sudanese document proposed that non-signatories be given a time frame to sign on to the Abuja agreement, after which they would be subject to sanctions imposed by the African Union and the United Nations.

61. These proposals broadly echoed a 28 November letter which President Bashir had sent me on these same subjects.

62. Having considered the Sudanese paper, and the remarks of the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the League of Arab States, which had participated as observers during the initial portion of the meeting, the Peace and Security Council issued its communiqué of 30 November. The communiqué endorsed the conclusions of the 16 November high-level consultations and, with respect to the hybrid operation, reflected the Peace and Security Council decisions that:

- The Special Representative shall be jointly appointed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Secretary-General
- The Force Commander of a hybrid operation, who should be an African, shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission in consultation with the Secretary-General
- The hybrid mission shall benefit from United Nations backstopping and command and control structures and systems

- The size of the force for the hybrid operation shall be determined by the African Union and the United Nations, on the basis of factors on the ground and requirements for effectively discharging its mandate.

63. The Peace and Security Council also decided to extend the mandate of AMIS, which expires on 31 December 2006, for six months, subject to review by the Council and the availability of financial resources.

64. The Peace and Security Council appealed to the United Nations to "consider providing logistical and financial support to the Mission, as envisaged in the conclusions of the Addis Ababa consultation". In the meantime, the Council appealed to partners of the African Union to provide required logistical and financial support to AMIS.

65. On 3 December, the Council of Ministers of the Sudan, under the chairmanship of President Bashir, endorsed the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 30 November. I welcome the communiqué of 30 November and the commitment to implementing the Addis Ababa conclusions. The Secretariat has started to work intensively with UNMIS and the African Union in order to turn the results of Addis Ababa and Abuja into concrete results. The United Nations and the African Union have identified their respective participation in the tripartite mechanism; UNMIS and the African Union are in ongoing dialogue on the work of the preparatory committee for the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation; and United Nations and AU teams are at this moment working together in Addis Ababa to finalize the heavy support package. The time has come, however, for the Government of the Sudan to remove all restrictions, both operational and political, imposed on the implementation of the two packages, and allow it to be delivered without delay.

VIII. Observations

66. Another two months have passed without bringing a breakthrough to the crisis in Darfur. The tragedy in this beleaguered region has been raging for three years now, and still the population remains subject to attacks, villages continue to be destroyed, killings, human rights abuses and brutality are perpetrated against innocent people and impunity is rampant. The conflict is increasingly spreading over the Sudanese borders, threatening to engulf the whole region in war. It is urgent that we take action to prevent further violations, including by bringing to account those responsible for the massive human rights abuses that have already been committed. It is essential that the Security Council send a clear and united message to warn all concerned that the current situation is unacceptable and will not be allowed to continue.

67. In addition, and as Council members are aware, in a letter dated 22 October 2006, the Government of the Sudan declared terminated the mission of my Special Representative in the Sudan. I deeply regret this decision, which has further complicated the search for expeditious solutions to the Darfur crisis.

68. Efforts to consolidate the support base for the Darfur Peace Agreement can only succeed if they are coordinated, inclusive and transparent. The main stumbling block, however, remains the belief of both the Government and the non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement that they can alter the situation militarily. As my Special Representative told the Security Council on 27 October, recent clashes

indicate that the Government of the Sudan continues to support a military solution to the conflict. I deplore the Government's use of aerial bombardments that fail to distinguish civilians from combatants, in breach of Security Council resolution 1591 (2005) and international humanitarian law.

69. The continued rejection, made under claims of sovereignty, of the deployment of United Nations troops in support of the AMIS operation results in the perpetuation of the attacks and abuses, which can no longer be tolerated. The time has come to lift all impediments, operational and legal, for United Nations assistance to the African Union, and to reaffirm the public declaration to cooperate with the African Union and the United Nations. We all should be guided by the sense of urgency this issue requires.

70. The most recent spate of violence and the persistent attacks on innocent civilians by armed militias are of particular concern. On 8 October, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report detailing brutal militia attacks on civilians in Buram in late August and early September. The High Commissioner called for an investigation into the attacks. I support this recommendation, and likewise encourage the Government to establish an independent national inquiry and bring to justice those responsible. Accountability of the perpetrators is a key step in bringing an end to such attacks.

71. I strongly urge all warring parties to immediately refrain from using violence against civilians, to respect humanitarian principles and to allow humanitarian actors to provide the much-needed assistance without hindrance. All parties should guarantee safe passage for relief workers and lift all operational restrictions. The Sudanese authorities should also extend the Darfur moratorium for a further 12 months when it expires in January 2007. This is a critical step for humanitarian organizations to be able to carry out their life-preserving work.

72. Donor support has been crucial to humanitarian efforts in Darfur. Not only have donors' contributions enabled the continuation of programmes in all life-saving sectors, they have also allowed the resumption of some activities such as the food-for-education programme. It is my hope that such financial support can be ensured in the coming year not only to sustain the current level of assistance but also to allow for contingency planning in case the situation worsens.

73. I deeply regret that the upsurge in violence along the Chad-Sudan border has reversed the diplomatic progress the Sudan and Chad had achieved through the signing of the 26 July agreement in Tripoli. The Governments of the Sudan and Chad should refrain from any action that might have a destabilizing impact on the region and return to political dialogue.

74. In the meantime, progress, however limited, has been made on the Ceasefire Commission under the leadership of the African Union. The United Nations will do everything possible to assist the AMIS leadership by supporting its efforts to make the ceasefire regime more effective through inclusiveness, credible investigations, accountability and implementation of the key security provisions of the Darfur Peace Agreement, by enhancing the capacities of AMIS through the support package, and by participating in the Ceasefire Commission and the Joint Commission. I encourage AMIS to convene a meeting of the Joint Commission at the earliest opportunity and look forward to its outcome. In the meantime, AMIS

should continue to enjoy the financial, logistical and political support of the international community.

75. It is of critical importance to capitalize on the Abuja meeting of 30 November. I intend to reiterate to President Bashir the commitment of the United Nations to implementing, without further delay, the steps agreed to at the high-level meeting in Addis Ababa on 16 November and later confirmed by the AU Peace and Security Council at its 30 November meeting. Given the recent alarming deterioration of the security situation in Darfur, the first priority must be to establish a ceasefire and to give impetus to the political process. These are critical conditions for any meaningful peacekeeping work.

76. The time has come to turn declarations into actions in order to achieve progress towards our crucial goal: bringing an end to the violence in Darfur, and restoring to its people the right to live a normal life, free of fear, with hope for a better future.